



# FAITH PRINCETON SUNDAY SCHOOL

REVELATION 11:1-14 Two Witnesses (Second Woe)

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2026

## REVELATION 11 Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme \_\_\_\_\_

### 11 The Two Witnesses

1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. 3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

## **Enduring Word Commentary: Revelation 11:1-14**

### **A. The temple of God.**

#### **1. (1) John is instructed to measure the temple, the altar and its worshippers.**

**Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.**

a. **A reed like a measuring rod:** In [Ezekiel 40-43](#), there is an extended passage where a temple is measured. The temple in Ezekiel is best understood as the temple of the millennial earth and the temple of [Revelation 11](#) seems to be *before* the temple of Ezekiel. Yet there are similarities; the temple in Ezekiel is also measured extensively ([Ezekiel 40:17-19](#)).

i. There are a few other Biblical examples of measuring. In [Zechariah 2](#), a man measured Jerusalem, a scene that evidently showed God’s coming judgment on the city. In [Revelation 21](#), the New Jerusalem is measured.

#### **b. Rise and measure the temple of God:**

Sometimes in the Old Testament, the idea of measuring communicates ownership, protection, and preservation. When Habakkuk prophesied, *He stood and measured the earth* ([Habakkuk 3:6](#)), the idea was that the Lord owned the earth and could do with it as He pleased. When this temple is measured, it shows that God knows its every dimension, and He is in charge.

i. *God is in charge.* This is one of the glorious, mighty themes of the Book of Revelation. [Revelation 11:17](#) again uses the

title *Almighty* for God. The Greek word for *Almighty* is *pantokrater*, and it describes “the one who has his hand on everything.” Nine out of the ten times this word is used in the New Testament, it is used in Revelation. This temple will be the scene of great horror and great glory, but God is in charge, working through both the good and bad actions of man.

c. **The temple of God:** The identity of this temple is an important matter of interpretation. Many see this temple as a symbol of the church.

i. Paul described the church as a temple: *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.* ([Ephesians 2:19-21](#))

ii. Peter described the church as a temple: *You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house.* ([1 Peter 2:5](#))

iii. However, if this temple in [Revelation 11](#) is a symbolic representation of the church, why should it be measured? What is the significance of the courts and the altar – and if the church itself is the temple, who are the worshippers (**those who worship there**)? There is too much specific detail here for this to match the generalized picture of the church as a temple unto God.

d. **The temple of God:** It is more likely that this is the temple that must be on the earth for the fulfillment of what Daniel, Jesus, and Paul said regarding the *abomination of desolation*.

- i. The prophet Daniel told us the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jewish people, bringing sacrifice and offerings to an end. This Antichrist will defile the temple by setting something abominable there ([Daniel 9:27, 11:31](#), and 12:11).
  - ii. Jesus said to look for an abomination standing in the holy place, which would be the pivotal sign that the season of God's wrath was upon the earth ([Matthew 24:15-16](#) and [24:21](#)).
  - iii. Paul told us that the Antichrist would sit in the temple as God ([2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#)).
  - iv. The concept of the *abomination of desolation* is often spiritualized with explaining it as idolatrous worship established in the hearts of God's people (His "temple"). But in what sense can people be called *God's temple* if they worship the Antichrist – an emissary of Satan himself? Certainly this isn't the most plain or straightforward interpretation. The simplest explanation of all these passages is to see a real Jewish temple on the temple mount in Jerusalem, yet to be built – but coming soon.
- e. **The temple of God:** In point of fact, today there are Jewish people *very* interested in rebuilding the temple and resuming sacrifice, and are making preparations to do that exact thing even now.
- i. Today you can visit the Temple Institute in the Jewish Quarter of the old city in Jerusalem. There, a group of Jews absolutely dedicated to rebuilding the temple attempt to educate the public and raise awareness for a new temple. They are trying to replicate everything they can for a new temple, down to the specific pots and pans used in sacrifice.
  - ii. Israel is a nation again, and efforts to rebuild the temple are for real. The main Jewish group leading

the charge to rebuild the temple is an organization called *Faithful of the Temple Mount*, who say they will continue their efforts to re-establish the Jewish temple on the Mount. One leader in the group said, "We shall continue our struggle until the Israeli flag is flying from the Dome of the Rock." In Israel, there are students being trained for the priesthood, learning how to conduct animal sacrifices in the rebuilt temple.

iii. It is important to understand that most Jews – religious or secular – do not care one bit about building a temple. And if there were one rebuilt, sacrifice would be difficult in a day of aggressive animal rights activists. Yet, there is a small, strong, highly dedicated group who live to see a rebuilt temple – a temple that will fulfill prophecy.

iv. Rightly, Christians get excited when they see efforts to rebuild the temple. At the same time, we should understand that the basic impulse behind rebuilding the temple is not of God at all – the desire to have a place to sacrifice for sin. Christians believe that all sacrifice for sin was finished at the cross, and any further sacrifice for sin is an offense to God, because it denies the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

v. Orthodox Jews consider that the Messiah will rebuild the temple; however, the man they may initially embrace as their Messiah may in fact be the Antichrist: *I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.* ([John 5:43](#))

## 2. (2) The outer court of the temple.

**But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.**

a. **But leave out the court which is outside the temple:** The outer court need not be measured because it has been **given to the Gentiles**.

Perhaps this is because the outer courts of this rebuilt temple include the Islamic Dome of the Rock shrine, which currently stands on the temple mount and is a point of great contention between Jews and Muslims.

i. When the Romans conquered Jerusalem in A.D. 70 they destroyed the city so completely that the foundations of the old temple are not easily found. Most have long assumed that the Dome of the Rock shrine stands on the place of the old temple. But new research gives some evidence that the temple may have stood to the north of where the Dome of the Rock shrine is today, and that if the temple were to be rebuilt at its old place, the Dome of the Rock shrine would be in its outer courts. If this is the case (and the research is by no means settled), then it would explain why the angel told John **leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles**.

b. **And they will tread the holy city underfoot:** The **holy city** (Jerusalem) will be **tread underfoot** for a period of **forty-two months**, which equals 1260 days (three and one-half years). This trampling of Jerusalem by Gentiles probably takes place in the last half of the final seven year period described by [Daniel 11:26-27](#) – when the Antichrist pours out his fury on the people of Israel (as described in [Revelation 12:13-17](#) and [Matthew 24:15-28](#)).

c. **And they will tread the holy city underfoot:** Greek scholar A.T. Robertson said that to **tread underfoot** means “to trample with contempt.”

**B. The two witnesses.**

**1. (3-6) The ministry of the two witnesses.**

**And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.**

a. **My two witnesses:** This introduces two of the more interesting characters of Revelation, the **two witnesses**. The character of their ministry is prophetic (**they will prophesy**); they preach and demonstrate repentance (**clothed in sackcloth**), and they have an effective ministry (**I will give power**).

i. The **two witnesses** indeed served with **power**. “Such power, in fact, that they are able to witness for 1,260 days in spite of the antagonism of the world.” (Walvoord)

b. **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands:** The witnesses have an unique, continual empowering from the Holy Spirit, as shown in Zechariah’s olive trees and oil lamps picture ([Zechariah 4:2-3](#) and [4:14](#)).

i. The passage from Zechariah had its first application to two men in Zechariah’s day: Joshua and Zerubbabel. “Just as these two witnesses were raised up to be lampstands or witnesses for God and were empowered by olive oil representing

the power of the Holy Spirit, so the two witnesses of [Revelation 11](#) will likewise execute their prophetic office.” (Walvoord)

ii. In the picture from Zechariah, oil lamps were filled directly from olive trees which piped oil right to the lamps. This is a picture of continual, abundant supply. If we will be **witnesses**, we must first have something to *witness* – our own personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Then, we must have the *power of the Holy Spirit* to bring forth the story of what we have witnessed effectively.

iii. “In this book of the Revelation the Holy Ghost borrows all the elegancies and flowers in the story of the Old Testament, thereby to set out the story of the New in succeeding ages.” (Trapp)

c. **And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies:** The two witnesses have special protection from God, similar to Elijah in [2 Kings 1](#).

d. **These have power to shut heaven... they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire:** The two witnesses have the power to bring both drought and plague, similar to the power Elijah ([James 5:17-18](#)) and Moses ([Exodus 7-12](#)) had.

e. **They... These... Them:** In the ancient Greek grammar, all the nouns used to speak of the two witnesses in this passage are in the masculine gender. The two witnesses are definitely two men.

## 2. (7-10) The death of the two witnesses.

**When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and**

**Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**

a. **Make war against them, overcome them, and kill them:** The two witnesses are killed by the **beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit** (first introduced in [Revelation 9:11](#), and who is most likely Satan himself) but their ministry is *not* cut short. They fully accomplish their task (**when they finish their testimony**).

i. God be thanked, we cannot be taken off of this earth until we **finish** our **testimony**. The devil does not have power over our lives. We are witnesses of the Lord, and He will protect us until our testimony is finished.

ii. This passage illustrates the difference between being a *witness* and giving *testimony*. *Witness* is not something we do; it is something we are. Giving *testimony* is what a witness does.

b. **And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified:** The two witnesses are killed in the city of Jerusalem, which is described in three illustrative terms.

- As **Sodom**, speaking of immorality.
- As **Egypt**, speaking of oppression and slavery.
- As **the great city**, a term often applied to *Babylon*, the headquarters of Antichrist ([Revelation 16:19](#), [17:18](#), [18:10](#), [18:16](#), [18:18](#), [18:19](#), [18:21](#)).

i. If, during the first three and one-half years, Jerusalem's leadership is in league with the Antichrist, it is easy to see how these titles apply. Any city in love with the Antichrist, or entering into a covenant with him, could be called **Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon**.

c. **Those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another:** The earth saw and rejoiced over the deaths of the two witnesses. The fact that this is seen by all **people, tribes, tongues, and nations** is perhaps an oblique prophecy of modern mass media.

i. It is amazing – and not far-fetched at all – to think of a live, worldwide broadcast on news channels and over the internet, “Live from Jerusalem,” and seeing the amazing scene described here taking place.

ii. The idea is also that the world treats these two witnesses in a humiliating manner. “To have his dead body lie in view of all was the worst humiliation a person could suffer from his enemies.” (Johnson)

iii. **Make merry, and send gifts to one another:** Donald Grey Barnhouse told of a Christmas card with [Revelation 11:10](#) on its cover – a terrible misquoting of the Scriptures!

d. **Because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth:** The preaching of these two witnesses and their call to repentance was a torment for many, because they could not stand to hear the truth while they loved their lie.

### 3. (11-14) The reviving of the two witnesses.

**Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who**

**saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.**

a. **They stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them:** As this happens before the eyes of the watching world, the enemies of these two witnesses are horrified and astonished.

b. **Come up here:** The earth was not worthy of these two witnesses, so God simply calls them home, and **they ascended to heaven in a cloud**.

c. **In the same hour there was a great earthquake:** An earthquake brings judgment, and moves many to give glory to God. But it remains to be seen if this will become true repentance unto salvation.

### 4. The identity of the two witnesses.

a. Many interpreters see the two witnesses as symbolic of the entire church in the tribulation period or as symbols of the law and the prophets. But how can so many *specific details* in their ministry be reconciled with such a symbolic interpretation?

b. The most plain and straightforward interpretation sees them as two real individuals, not symbolic representations.

i. Unfortunately, the list is not short of modern nuts who think *they* are one of the two witnesses. I think that if you added them all together, there would be about 144,000 of them!

c. Who they are must not be terribly important, or we would have been told exactly who they are!

i. Generally, if the two witnesses are identified with any two individuals from the past, the leading candidates are Elijah, Moses, or Enoch. Or, perhaps these are merely two believers ministering in the *spirit and power* of these great men, even as John the Baptist went forth in the *spirit and power of Elijah* ([Luke 1:17](#) and [Matthew 7:12-13](#)).

ii. Some think Enoch is one of the witnesses because he was carried up to heaven by God ([Genesis 5:25](#)).

iii. Some think Elijah is one of the witnesses because:

- His ministry seems like one of these two witnesses ([2 Kings 1](#) and [James 5:17-18](#)).
- He was carried up to heaven ([2 Kings 2:11](#)).
- Enemies of Elijah were destroyed by fire ([2 Kings 1](#)).
- It is specifically prophesied that Elijah will return before the end of the age ([Malachi 4:5-6](#)).
- Elijah had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration ([Matthew 17:1-6](#)).

iv. Some think Moses is one of the witnesses because:

- His ministry seems like one of these witnesses ([Exodus 7:20-21](#)).
- God seems to have a special purpose for the body of Moses that Satan wanted to defeat ([Jude 1:9](#)).
- The enemies of Moses were destroyed by fire ([Numbers 16:35](#)).
- Moses had a unique “conference” with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration ([Matthew 17:1-6](#)).

v. Some believe the two witnesses must be Enoch and Elijah, because neither of them died a natural death and were instead carried to heaven, and [Hebrews 9:27](#) says that it is appointed for men to die once – so Enoch and Elijah must return to die on the earth. This is a misunderstanding of [Hebrews 9:27](#), which is a principle rather than an absolute, immutable law. For example, Lazarus and others were raised from the dead and apparently died *twice* – yet this does not disprove [Hebrews 9:27](#). The entire church on earth at the time of the rapture will not die, but be carried to heaven. [Hebrews 9:27](#) stands as a principle, and there are a few notable exceptions which ultimately serve to prove the rule, not deny it. There may be good reasons for considering Enoch and Elijah as the two witnesses, but the principle of [Hebrews 9:27](#) is not among those good reasons.